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BINATIONAL CENTERS' ACTIVITIES

MEDELLIN

Martin Luther King Jr. Fellowship for Afro and Indigenous Population

The Centro Colombo Americano, with co-sponsorship provided by the United States Embassy in Bogotá, awarded 12 new grants to participants in the second cohort of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Fellowship Program. A group of young students of Afro-Colombian and indigenous descent were the lucky recipients of these grants which will allow them to study English in the Colombo Americano from 2009 to 2011.

The MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. fellows will receive all the educational materials needed to help them further develop their English competences. The program also offers students complementary services to support their language learning process such as tutoring service, conversation clubs, self study sessions at the institu-



tion's Multimedia Learning Center, as well as advising for international studies and inclusion in the cultural agenda developed by the Colombo Americano. These students will also participate in leadership activities directed by local, national, and international community leaders.

Youth Scholarships at the Colombo Americano



Creating New Opportunities through English (C-NOTE)

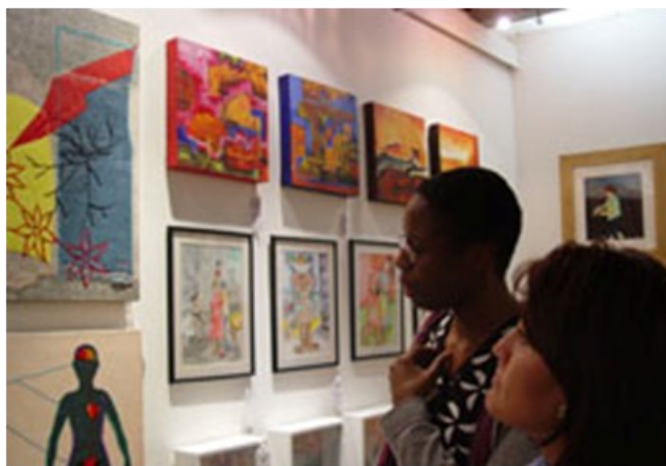
The Centro Colombo Americano, in co-sponsorship with the United States Embassy in Bogotá, gave a total of 15 scholarships for English studies through its Creating New Opportunities through English program. These grants were offered to 15 youngsters between the ages of 15 and 17, who are all high school students in public institutions in the city's downtown area and come from social-strata 1, 2, and 3.

The program aims at improving the young beneficiaries' communicative competences in the language and allowing them to have better professional training for the future.

Heartists in the Market Place

The 8th Annual Art Fair "Heartists in the Market Place" was held at the Centro Colombo Americano-Medellin in its San Fernando site. This event allowed people to purchase works of art from renowned local artists at reasonable prices (the highest price was equivalent to a minimum salary).

Thirty percent of the sales were destined for the "Arte e Infancia" program from "Desearte Paz", which in 2009 will continue to promote the social inclusion of socially-vulnerable children through artistic experiences that will allow participants to have an integral development of their personality.

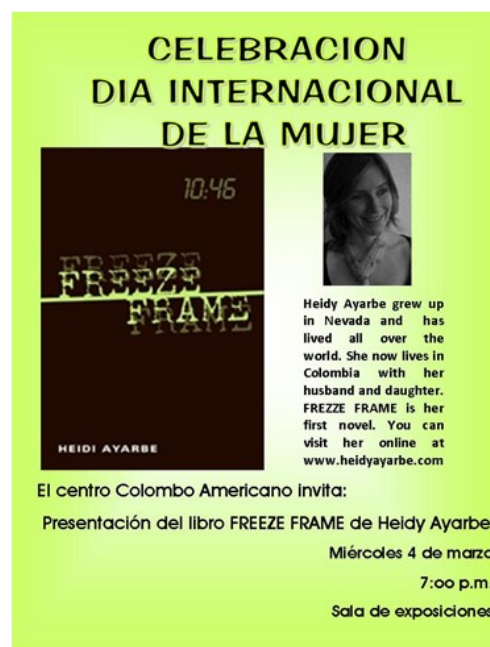


PEREIRA

Book presentation

The Centro Colombo Americano Pereira was pleased to celebrate International Women's Day with the presentation of a book: "FREEZE FRAME" by Heidi Ayarbe, who is a Colombo teacher and also a member of our Executive Board.

All Colombo students, teachers, administrative staff and the others Executive Board members were invited to the event on March 4th.



Seminar



In order to take advantage of the Holy Week recess – a time for self-reflection and spirituality - The Centro Colombo Americano Pereira programmed a seminar for two days (April 6th and 7th) for the administrative staff from the BNC. The guest facilitator was Hugo Ramirez, a well renowned psychologist and philosopher with over 40 years of experience in the fields of semiotics, coaching, psychological therapy, and NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming).

This seminar sought to improve interpersonal communication and taught participants how thoughts and words can significantly change behavior and lead to success in life.

Those attending the workshop were pleased with the opportunity to participate and remarked on its positive message.

English through theater: A Professional Development Project for teachers of the public sector in Pereira

Colombia is making its first efforts to move towards bilingual education. Most private schools have been adjusting to this new challenge and have reinforced their English Programs by adding more weekly hours, providing the best available resources and training their teachers in the newest ELT trends. However, these actions do not reach the state education sector, where students and teachers lack opportunities to learn a foreign language.

According to the general situation, only 10% of the English teachers in Colombia reach a B2 level or higher, which means that more than 90% of the teachers have a lower level.

The Centro Colombo Americano Pereira, thanks to the support of the US Government, is currently running an innovative project with the goal of training English teachers from elementary schools of the public sector by using “theater” as a tool to develop oral fluency and linguistic competency. Thirty



(30) teachers of the public sector with little English knowledge will be taken to an A2 level according to the CEFR (Common European Framework Reference) international standards, facilitating the achievement of the plan “Colombia Bilingüe 2019” in Pereira.

Through this process, the Centro Colombo Americano Pereira, with the economical sup-



E-Learning professional development programs for Binational Centers teachers

Thanks to the support of the US Embassy, the Binational Centers had the chance to be part of the “E-Teacher” learning program which aims to facilitate teachers’ professional development towards an improvement of their teaching practice. After a process, the Adult Program Academic Coordinator of the Binational Center Colombo Americano Pereira, Martin Caicedo, was chosen to participate in the E-learning course “Critical Thinking Skills” delivered by the University of Oregon. This course gathered teachers from more than 10 countries from around the world.

CARTAGENA

BNC Barranquilla – Nebraska University Union

Finnie A. Murray, Director of International Education of the University of Nebraska, Kearny in the United States; and Fernando Segura, Coordinator of the Latin American Programs for this same institution, came for a visit to Centro Colombo Americano de Cartagena and Fundacion Universitaria Colombo International. The main purpose of their visit was to study the viability of an exchange agreement between students in both institutions to enrich their cultural background.



Visit of Hilary Fuller Renner



The Centro Cultural Colombo Americano de Cartagena was happy to receive a visit from Hillary Fuller Renner Cultural Attaché Public Affairs Section, an officer of the American Embassy in Bogota, who came to see our facilities and learn about the programs which are developed in our Institution.

Martin Luther King Jr's anniversary

From January 20 through January 30 the Centro Cultural Colombo Americano held different activities in honor of the anniversary of the leader Martin Luther King, Jr. these activities took place in both branches of the institution located Downtown and in Los Cuatro Vientos.

Among the activities there were: Conferences on the Life of Martin Luther King, Jr; Candelario Obeso, Barack Obama. There was also a paper show with pictures and stories of the best moments lived by Martin Luther King, Jr.



New Auditorium

The Centro Colombo Americano inaugurated its new "AMAURY ROMAN ROMAN" auditorium with a capacity for 90 people. This space will be of great benefit in the development of academic and cultural activities for the institution and the community of Cartagena.

Special recognition was made to Mr. Amaury Roman Roman for his invaluable support and contribution of more than thirty years as a member of the Centro Colombo Americano Board of Directors.



BARRANQUILLA

The International Women's Day



Centro Cultural Colombo Americano and Association Dia internacional de la mujer, celebrated the international women's day with an exposition on Lincoln Gallery, 15 local plastic artists participated:

Neva Lallemand, Nora Avendaño, Elisa Velásquez, Beatriz Vergara de Parra, Marlene Cortez, Marina Arteta, Adela Dugand, Carmen Racedo, Anita Alvis, Liliana Mejía, Elvira Perdomo, Ana Lucía Orozco, Carmen Sierra, Miriam Armella, María Cristina Betancourt.

During the exposure the Centro Cultural Colombo Americano, made recognition to Nora Avendaño painter, for her more than six decades dedicated to plastic arts on this city. a special medal "Colombo 50 años" was gave by the director Edwar McGrath.

The day of opening, the Lincoln Gallery had more than 150 guests who value the different paintings of the artists.

“Carnival’s Photographs”

Jaime Manzur, in his artistic photography, focuses his interest on the carnivals, on the graphic document. With his camera he captures the image that only the trained human eye can see in a quick, timely and precise fashion. His photography of the carnivals catches the street environment, it's spontaneous, clean, with no make-up, characterised by a hard brief instant in motion, which is achieved only by expertise and professionalism.

His work is of a high photographic quality and Jaime implements a meticulous performance in order to select materials for an exhibit.



Folk Band of Barranquilla District

This group was founded in 2002. His founder and director is Arlington Pardo Plaza who holds a B.A. Degree in Music. His first presentation was homage to composers from the coasts: "La Cantata del Carnaval" was performed.

"La Banda Folclorica Distrital" has been a project supported by: "Secretaria de Cultura y Turismo Del Distrito de Barranquilla ", meant to preserve our musical roots and highlight the musical quality of the Colombian Caribbean instruments.

The band has a unique format, the use of folk instruments as "millo" flute, bass drum and "gaitas" (a kind of flute in the Atlantic Coast of Colombia) with bass and keys. The "Banda Folclorica" consists of 120 musicians ranging from children, youngsters to adult. It has performed out of Barranquilla, in cities like Bogotá, Manizales, Machique (Venezuela) Cartagena, Santa Marta, Montería.

Nowadays the "Banda Folclorica" is a foundation supported by "Secretaria de Cultura y Turismo de Barranquilla".



Conference: "El Garabato"

LEOPOLDO KLEE PALACIO: Surgeon, Specialist in Urology, Zaragoza University, España. He has been the director of "Festival Universitario Hispanoamericano" of Zaragoza Five times. Member of "La Cipote E' Vaina" cumbia group from 1986 to 1989, founder of the "Garabato del Norte" dance group, 1991 Rey Momo (Momo King) of Barranquilla Carnivals, 2003.

Under his direction the "Garabato del Norte" dance group has participated in the following events: "Festival Nacional del Folclor" " Reinado Nacional del Bambuco" "Fiesta Nacional del Café", "Feria de las Flores" "Reinado Nacional de la Ganadería" y "Fiesta de la Cosecha", Pereira.



ARMENIA

How to write a Personal Statement Workshop

The Education USA Advising Center at the BNC Armenia held a workshop on how to write an outstanding personal statement last March 19. This was possible thanks to the Institutional Agreement between the Bi-national Center and Universidad del Quindío which was established more than a year ago. Participants included members of the G-30 group, students with the highest Grade Point Average of the university, as well as grantees of the Opportunity Grant Program.

The BNC Armenia Education USA Center and the International Relations Office of Universidad del Quindío have established a close relationship

to offer highly academically talented university students from Quindío the possibility to enhance their resumes so as to qualify to study opportunities in the U.S.A. The coming workshop will be about letters of recommendation.



BUCARAMANGA

Art Exhibition

During the celebration of the international year of astronomy 2009, we are pleased to share with all of you the most recent and advanced in the space art.

This pictorial proposal combines art and science and extends our landscape to the infinite, to the universe a landscape common to inhabitants in our planet.

Visitors liked so much.

This exhibition will go to Bogotá, Cartagena, Barranquilla, Pereira.



Seminar: “La Opera”



Both conferences aim to go through the history of the Opera of his high points, Baroque, Classical and Romantic Periods, from his beginnings until the event of the nineteenth century.

CALI

Yumbo Bilingual



In the photo from left to right: Ana Lucia Jaramillo, Executive Director AmCham, JoEllen Simpson, General Director Centro Cultural Colombo Americano in Cali, Ambassador Brownfield, Ferney Lozano, Mayor of Yumbo

On January 27th the Centro Cultural Colombo Americano in Cali signed an agreement with the mayor of Yumbo to bring our Valle bilingual project to the city of Yumbo. This project has as its primary objective to teach English to school teachers in the 13 public schools in Yumbo. The long-term goal is that these teachers will be able to use English in their classrooms in order to help students reach higher levels of language learning.

The agreement was signed during the recent visit of the US Ambassador William Brownfield, who added his signature as a witness. Ambassador Brownfield stressed the importance of learning a foreign language, especially English, in order to be more competitive in a globalized world.

English Unplugged in the South Branch

The Centro Cultural Colombo Americano of Cali joins the celebration of Earth Day (April 22). We have organized a program consisting of visual arts, music and academic activities throughout the month of April. The Colombo is joining the efforts of those in many sectors who are working to create a collective consciousness on the importance of protecting the environment and in recognizing the resources and treasures that our environment contains. On April 22nd in the South Branch we will celebrate with a special sing-along concert with the young artist Aris Yupanki.



Martin Luther King

The young lady to Ambassador Brownfield's left probably had no idea at that moment that one year later she would be making plans to travel to Clemson, South Carolina, in order to further her doctoral studies in Biosystems Engineering at Clemson University. Susana Lizcano is one of the Martin Luther King Fellows sponsored by FUPAD who dedicated her very limited free time to studying English at the Centro Cultural Colombo Americano. Based on her dedication and motivation she was also selected for the Opportunities Grant, sponsored by the Department of State, which helped her financially in the whole process of applying to universities. Susana received a generous financial aid offer from Clemson and was able to travel on January 8, 2009. Susana is an environmental engineering graduate from the Universidad Nacional in Palmira, Colombia.



In the photo from left to right: MLK Fellows Lessi Salazar, Susan Micolta, Ambassador William R. Brownfield, Susana Lizcano, Luz Esneda Murillo, Martha Viáfara, Dolly Vergara

Black History Month

The Centro Cultural Colombo Americano in Cali has prepared an extended version of BLACK HISTORY MONTH celebration. The event starts with the opening on February 19 with an art exhibit of three Afrocolombians from El Patía, Cauca, and Buenaventura, Valle. This exposition brings with it a sense of the true nature and tradition in the artists' communities. The special techniques of the exhibits showcase the natural materials in El Patía (leaves, pictures, sounds and music from the villages and its people), making possible for every visitor to make a small journey to El Patía, Cauca. The BLACK HISTORY MONTH celebration also includes documentary programs, recommended books in the library, a Marimba concert performed by musicians from Buenaventura, which has been organized in collaboration with the Universidad Del Pacífico in Buenaventura. The celebration ends in March with a special visit from the African American actress and story teller Ilene Evans, who will visit us through the Embassy in Bogota. The BNC in Cali hopes to truly commemorate the celebration of BLACK HISTORY MONTH in a community where a significant percentage of the population is of Afrocolombian heritage.

Easter Bunny visits BNC Cali

In order to give our students a sense of how Easter is celebrated in North America, our academic department held Easter egg hunts in our north branch. The Easter Bunny also visited our students to hand out candy.



Photo Exhibition: Colombia, the Color of Paradise



To share the diversity, color, and beauty of the birds of Colombia is the photographic proposal of Santiago Escruceria in his COLOMBIA PARADISE OF COLORS exhibition. The photo exhibition will begin on March 26 and will end on April 23, Earth Day. Santiago's interest in photographing birds began in 1994. Initially he worked with film photography and later on with digital technique with minimal manipulation. His inspiration is also a part of the work he does as an environmental educator with the Mono Lake Committee in Sierra Nevada of California. At Mono Lake, he

directs a program that invites inner-city youth from Los Angeles to learn about the nature and themselves.

Santiago is a Colombian-born American citizen residing in California, USA, for the past 30 years. He graduated with a B.A. in Cultural Anthropology and a Minor degree in Environmental Studies from Sonoma State University, in northern California. He has taught Environmental Education - in Spanish and English - for the past 17 years, 11 of which he has spent with the Mono Lake Committee (www.monolake.org), in the Eastern Sierra of California. At Mono Lake he manages an outdoor education program for Los Angeles' inner-city youth. Santiago is an avid birding enthusiast and during summers, he leads bird watching tours for school groups and the public, including helping at the Mono Lake Committee's annual Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua.

Regional ELT Conference

The Cali Colombo is hosting its 17th Annual ELT conference on May 8 and 9. The theme is “Best Practices in ELT” and speakers and attendees are expected from the other eight BNCs in Colombia as well as from schools, both public and private and universities in the area. A special discount is available to BNC teachers from other cities who wish to attend the conference.

MANIZALES

Public School Teachers in Manizales Learn How to Use Instructional Technologies in the Language Classroom



Seventy-seven teachers from fifteen public schools that are targeted to become “national bilingual schools” in Manizales will benefit from a series of four workshops on instructional technology applied to the English language classroom offered by Senior English Language Fellow Erin Lowry. On February 18, 2009, the Secretary of Education and Mayor of Manizales met with the teachers and principals from thirteen of these schools, as well as representatives from the Centro Colombo Americano, to promote the workshops that began the same week.

All workshops will include training on how to find language teaching and learning resources using the Internet even if the main focus of the workshop is not technology. Each workshop is 2 hours long, and will cover topics such as teaching listening and speaking, pronunciation, and designing materials for the English as a foreign language classroom. Participating teachers will receive a diploma from ELF Lowry after 8 hours of workshops.

English-to-Go Kicks off Second Year in Caldas

Students and teachers at twelve public schools that are targeted to become “national bilingual schools” in Manizales will be part of the Centro Colombo Americano’s outreach program title English-to-Go in 2009. Six collections will rotate between these schools, all of which are participating in the *Manizales Bilingüe* project led by the Secretary of Education and Mayor of Manizales. Each school will have two bags for two months at a time. The collections include books in both English and Spanish, with a variety of topics including literature, grammar, geography, history, graded readers, and culture. Students and teachers of all grades and subject areas will have access to the materials, and are encouraged to use them to promote reading and the English language.



In 2008, the English-to-Go collections circulated among public libraries in eight different municipalities in the department of Caldas, as well as some public schools in Manizales.

Introducing new MET to University Deans in Manizales



Deans from five universities of Manizales attended a breakfast meeting at the Centro Colombo Americano last March 19th. The Executive Director and the Education USA Adviser addressed the audience to present the new MET, a test of general knowledge of the English language designed by the University of Michigan, English Language Institute and launched in December, 2008. This test is being administered by the nine BNCs in Colombia since January, 2008 under a special agreement with this university.

The BNC representatives and university Deans shared ideas about ways to increase and facilitate

information to university students and professors about opportunities to pursue higher education in the U.S.

The educational advisor also presented the main characteristics and criteria to help talented students willing to study in the U.S. with the “Opportunity & Initiative Grant”. Nine grantees have benefited from this Program in Manizales to date.